

CITY OF RENTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INTRODUCTION

It is the City of Renton's primary responsibility to provide public services and facilities, develop policies, and adopt regulations that ensure the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. The City government is also charged with directing the growth of the City so that quality of life of the community and opportunities for its citizens remain high. The guide for Renton's growth and development is the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan and the Growth Management Act

The City of Renton Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is in compliance with the Washington State Growth Management Act of 1990 (GMA). The GMA requires cities and counties in rapidly growing areas to adopt Comprehensive Plans that include policy direction for land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, and transportation. All parts of the Plan must be consistent with each other and with adopted statewide, regional, and countywide planning goals.

Statewide planning goals include provisions that discourage urban sprawl, support affordable housing, protect the environment, and support provision of adequate urban services. In addition to these requirements, plans must be designed to accommodate 20-year growth forecasts, determined by regional agencies and local jurisdictions, within well-defined "urban growth areas."

Regional or countywide planning has defined "urban centers" in locations where concentrations of people and uses that can be served by transit are desirable. Cities and counties have worked cooperatively to identify where the provision of urban services may be appropriate (the Urban Growth Areas), and where rural levels of service, agriculture and low-density population and low intensity uses will be situated (Rural Areas). Regional policy provides for "urban separators" between and within urban areas to define and shape communities, to protect significant environmentally constrained lands, and provide urban open space.

The Plan is a broad statement of community goals, objectives, and policies that directs the orderly and coordinated physical development of the City. Renton's Plan anticipates change and provides specific guidance for future legislative and administrative actions. It is the result of citizen involvement, technical analysis, and the creativity and experience of decision-makers in City government.

The vision, goals, objectives, policies, and maps of the Plan provide the foundation for the regulations, programs, and services that implement the Plan. The Plan serves as a guide for designating land uses, infrastructure development, and community services.

The Plan is designed to be a functional document that guides Renton's future development and fulfills the City's regional responsibilities toward state-mandated growth management.

The Plan contains background information on Renton's history and profile, citywide trends, and local and regional growth projections.

The Plan summarizes a Vision for Renton that has been endorsed by the community. The chapters or "Elements" of the Plan contain goals, objectives, and policies that further the evolution of the City toward attaining that Vision.

The Comprehensive Plan includes the following State mandated "Elements":

- Capital Facilities
- Housing
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Utilities

Renton also includes the following Optional Elements:

- Community Design
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails
- Human Services

Community Plans and Neighborhoods

The Comprehensive Plan is a citywide document that provides policy guidance for the growth and the development of the City as a whole based on a community vision. Beginning in 2009, the City will begin to work on a series of Community Plans that establish a vision and for each geographical sub-area within the City. The goal is to include all of the neighborhoods of the City in a Community Plan within six years. Community planning will involve residents, businesses, and other stakeholders with a goal of developing a policy document to provide focused direction on topics such as growth, land use, capital improvements, urban design, and quality of life. Each plan will be unique to the community that creates it, and will be updated every six years to reflect the changing needs of the neighborhood.

The Planning Process

Renton residents, business owners, and City staff work together to shape the future of the community through the ongoing development of the Plan. The planning process provides

an opportunity for individual citizens to contribute to this effort by attending community meetings to identify, study, and resolve issues of concern or by serving on committees, task forces, boards, or commissions that function as citizen advisors to the City Council (Council).

Because public input is vital to effective planning, community groups, businesses, and individuals are invited and encouraged to work with City staff to identify and achieve community goals. The following principles should guide the planning process:

- Encourage and facilitate public participation in all phases of the planning process.
- Work to ensure that the planning process is accessible to all citizens, that it is consistent, timely, and can be widely understood by all potential participants.
- Base land use decisions on the interests of the entire community and the goals and policies of the Plan.
- Demonstrate that proposed land use change responds to the interests and needs of the entire City and the neighborhoods directly impacted by the project, as well as the property owner and the project proponent.
- Balance the interests of commercial and residential communities when considering modifications to zoning or development regulations.
- Encourage and emphasize open communication between developers and neighbors about land use issues.
- Strive for compatibility of land use within the City.

The primary responsibility for formulating the Plan rests with the Planning Commission (Commission). The Commission is a committee of citizen volunteers, appointed by the Mayor, to make recommendations to the Council for land use policy changes to the Plan. Before making a recommendation, the Commission conducts public hearings on behalf of the Council. The Commission weighs information and comments presented by individual citizens and community organizations as it prepares Plan revision recommendations to the Council.

The Council makes the final planning decisions. The Council is responsible for initiating plan reviews, considering Commission recommendations, and adopting amendments to the Plan. To implement the Plan, the Council is also responsible for adopting the City budget, regulations and programs, levying taxes, and making appropriations.

Changing the Comprehensive Plan

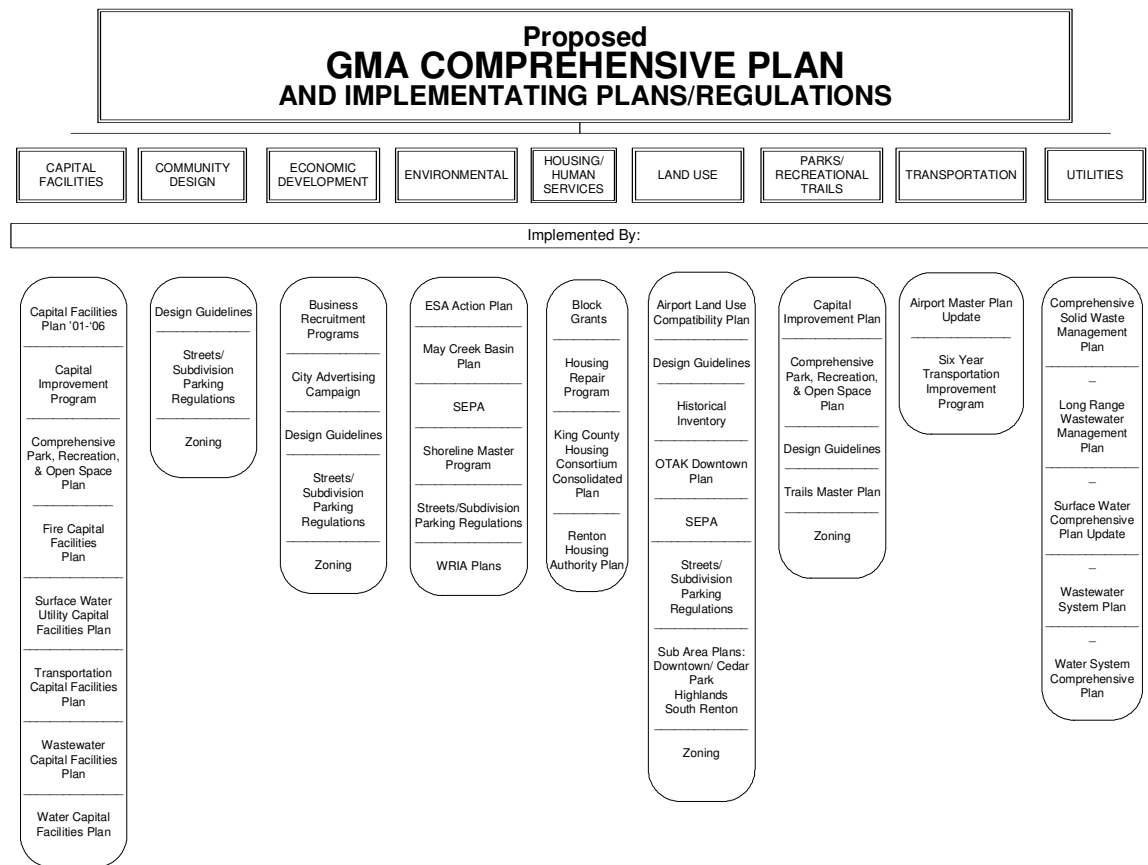
Because the City is constantly evolving, it may be occasionally necessary to make revisions to the Plan. These changes are in the form of amendments to the Plan. The

Council considers amendments to the Plan, based on recommendations made by the Commission, once a year (unless in the case of an emergency). The Mayor, Council, Commission, or private parties may submit proposed amendments.

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

After adoption of the Plan, the next step toward realizing the City's Vision is implementation. The Plan is implemented through a variety of programs and functional systems plans including water and sewer plan, parks, recreation and trails plan, transit and transportation corridor studies, human services programs, the City's housing repair program, and the Capital Improvement Plan. The City's subdivision and zoning regulations also implement the plan. Figure 1 illustrates the Comprehensive Plan Elements and implementing plans and programs.

Figure 1



CITY OF RENTON BACKGROUND

Location and Physical Setting

Renton is located at the south end of Lake Washington on the edge of metropolitan and rural King County. Renton covers more than 25 square miles of land and is bordered by King County, Kent, Tukwila, Newcastle, and Bellevue with Seattle nearby.

Its location, approximately equidistant from the central business districts of Seattle and Bellevue and within proximity to Tacoma, places Renton in the center of a region that is the economic hub of the Northwest. The City is at the crossroads of a regional transportation network where seven state and federal highways converge and is central to regional, national, and international air travel.

The natural features that define the edges of the City and its neighborhoods include the lake, hills, plateaus, stream corridors, and river valleys. While development over time has changed the appearance of the community, the natural features have generally remained constant.

Abundant, green wooded areas characterize the hillsides encircling the downtown and along the Cedar River, May and Honey Creeks. The topography and location of the City afford beautiful views of a variety of significant natural features including Mt. Rainier, Lake Washington, and the Olympic and Cascade Mountains.

Renton's residential areas have traditionally been organized around schools, parks, and other institutions. Both new and existing neighborhoods offer diverse housing stock that is wide-ranging in unit size, style, type, and price. Although it is one of the older cities within the region, Renton still has vacant and underused land in many neighborhoods, including the downtown, that offer an opportunity for growth.

Renton's Past

Duwamish Native Americans were the earliest known people to live in what is now Renton. The Duwamish had their village near the confluence of Lake Washington, the Cedar and Black Rivers, at the base of Earlington Hill.

In 1853, east coast entrepreneur Henry Tobin arrived, and recognizing the advantages of the physical location, laid claim to the area near where the Cedar entered the Black River. Being at the confluence of two rivers near a large lake was thought to be ideal for siting a future city for industrial and commercial growth, with the opportunity for navigable transportation nearby. Officers of the Renton Coal Company formally established the City of Renton in 1875 with the filing of a plat. That plat included what is now the downtown core.¹

Early industries and businesses included coal mining, lumber harvesting, brick making, and rail and freight transportation. Early grocery stores and other family-run stores were located in what is presently downtown Renton. Both the Walla Walla Railroad and the Puget Sound Electric Railway linked the downtown core to other communities. In its early days, Renton had many businesses including banking and drug, hardware, junk, grocery, clothing, and home furnishings stores. In 1901, upon incorporation, the City had

a total area of one square mile. Since then, incremental annexations have increased the size of the City to encompass approximately 17.3 square miles.

Employment in Renton was dominated by industry from when the City was first settled in the mid 1800's. Because of the nearby forests and proximity to water for transport, the first local industry was timber harvesting and processing. Beginning in the 1870's and continuing through the 1940's, Renton was known for its coal mining and brick making operations. Other industries included production and transport of lumber, and the supply of steel, pig iron, and equipment to railroad companies. During this period, the City established itself as an important industrial center.

The identification by the US Navy of Renton's location on Lake Washington as ideal for production of a "flying boat," prior to the nation's entry into World War II, was a significant turning point in the history of the City. Only one was actually produced, but that project led to what became the home of future aircraft that changed the aviation industry.

The Navy transferred the land to the US Army and The Boeing Company Renton Plant subsequently produced the B-29 high-altitude bomber for the Army Air Corps.

Renton has also been the location of Pacific Car and Foundry (PACCAR) since the beginning of the twentieth century. During World War II, PACCAR transitioned from building railroad cars to Sherman tanks.

The Boeing Company's manufacturing and assembly plant at the south end of Lake Washington dramatically influenced the City's future. Rapid growth of The Boeing Company and PACCAR accelerated the City's rise as a regional industrial and employment center. In the decade from 1940-1950, Renton was transformed from a small town of 4,500 to a thriving city with a population of 16,039.

With the shift away from rail, toward automobile and truck transportation in the 1940s and 1950's, a new type of regional transportation hub was created in Renton. Two major freeways (Interstate 405 and SR 167) and three State highways (SR 900, 515, and 169) augmented and replaced the rail system. This road system was developed to provide a regional network allowing access around Lake Washington to serve the Renton industrial area. During this period, the transportation demand shifted from exporting raw materials to importing a major work force.

The industrial employment centers developed at the same locations formerly occupied by extractive industries--perhaps in part because the transportation network to serve these sites was already well established. This became important because the industrial area remained in the heart of the City and was served by a transportation network that converged on the downtown area.

As the twenty-first century begins, Renton is again experiencing transition of its downtown industrial area, as the Boeing Renton Plant within Renton's Urban Center becomes available for redevelopment as mixed-use residential, retail/commercial, office,

and light industrial uses. Once again, the transportation network will further the transition.

Community Profile

Renton has grown from a single square mile on the shore of the lake, to over 25 square miles spread across the Cedar and Green River Valley floors and onto the adjacent hills. Once separated by rural areas and open space, Renton and its neighbor cities are growing together and have become part of the larger Puget Sound metropolitan region.

Incorporated in 1901, Renton is fifth oldest of King County's 39 cities and ranks fifth in the County in population size.² Renton is the 11th most populous city in the state⁹ and King County is the seventeenth most populous county in the nation.²

The 2000 U.S. Census indicated that Renton had a population increase over the previous ten years of more than 20 percent. Only 1.5 percent of the increase is attributable to annexations. Renton is currently home to 78,780 people, resulting in a growth rate of over 57% between 2000 and 2008.⁹ However, in this period more than 34% of the increase is attributable to annexations.¹⁰

As the population of the City grows, it also becomes more diverse. The 2000 census indicated that 68 percent of the population considers itself as white, a change from 84 percent from the previous census. Both the Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino populations more than doubled during the 1990s and the number of Hispanic students in Renton schools increased by 379 percent.³

The median household income in 1990 of \$32,393 increased almost 30 percent by 2000 to \$45,820². The average wealth of Renton households is \$226,395.⁵ Approximately 8.5 percent of the working age population (18 to 64) lives below the poverty level². The assessed value of Renton's land area (in thousands of dollars) is 6,272,632.⁶

Almost 52,000 people work for 2,312 employers⁵ and at 1,517 businesses in Renton. These jobs are divided into sectors by type. Manufacturing, with almost 21,000 jobs, remains Renton's largest sector. This indicates that The Boeing Company and PACCAR remain major players in the local and regional economy. The next most significant sector, with 11,413 employees, is the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and other Services sector.²

Additional information summarizing Renton population and household characteristics is available in the document "The Changing Face of Renton" prepared by the City Human Services Division of the Community Services Department. This document summarizes the 2000 Census data for the population within Renton's year 2000 city boundaries and is available on the City's website at www.ci.renton.wa.us. Additional information about populations in the unincorporated areas surrounding the City is available from the King County Annual Growth Report available on the County website at www.metrokc.gov.

TRENDS

Renton, historically, has been a small town and in many ways it still resembles a small city. But several factors place it on the threshold of change: the continuing transition of Renton's industrial sector; regional population growth; and its location at the crossroads of local, national, and international transportation. These factors foreshadow a new role for Renton as an important metropolitan center in the region.

Renton, along with the rest of the Northwest, has been experiencing an increase in professional and service jobs over the past few years. Boeing's related research and development facilities in and around Renton were a major factor in the development of office parks south of the downtown and at the north end of the Green River Valley. At the same time, there has been increased demand for goods and services as evidenced by the number and types of commercial businesses in the City.

Vacant land remains scattered throughout Renton, but as infill development continues, land will become an increasingly scarce resource. Some vacant land, located outside of the Urban Center, may be environmentally sensitive and not suitable for full development. As annexations occur, more undeveloped land will become available. In 2005, there are approximately 975 acres of vacant and developable land within the City of Renton. Of this, the largest blocks of vacant land are generally found in Renton's outlying areas. Smaller parcels that are available for development can be found in the City's existing neighborhoods. *[Note: For a discussion of trends in residential land use, see the Housing Element of this Plan]*

The challenge for Renton is to manage growth in a manner that maintains the desirable features of the City while being flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities for change.

Urban Center

As the twentieth century closed, development occurring outside of the City affected the character of Renton. Regional shopping centers competing with Renton's downtown retail core resulted in a shift in marketable goods in the downtown from general merchandise to specialty items. In response, several significant developments were made to begin the transition from a stagnant small town core to a new urban center. City-initiated redevelopment of the Piazza area, including a central park, multi-story public parking garage, a transit center, and performing arts center enhanced several privately initiated mixed-use residential/commercial developments.

In addition to this energetic infusion of creative energy and financing in the Urban Center-Downtown, changes in The Boeing Company business plan resulted in a concept for the Urban Center-North, comprised of almost 300 acres of the Boeing Renton Plant site. This is the first step toward transition of an area used for industrial manufacturing for over sixty years into an urban mixed-use neighborhood.

Within the next few years, as the first redevelopment of the Boeing Renton Plant area occurs, it is anticipated that major national retailers will locate in Renton providing

additional economic development for the City, and a wide range of goods and services within Renton's Urban Center. As this change occurs, it is anticipated that Renton's historic downtown will be rejuvenated as a mixed-use specialty retail/ residential area while the Urban Center-North will become a new urban community incorporating employment, retail, residential and entertainment sectors.

Commercial Corridors

Due to relatively low land cost, a number of low intensity, suburban-type commercial areas exist along Renton's commercial corridors. This pattern of development will likely continue until land values rise. Evidence of this development pattern can be seen along Rainier Blvd and NE 4th Street. Strip commercial is another common result of low intensity development, especially along principal and major arterial routes; one example is along both sides of Benson Road, south of Carr/SE 176th. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element sets a policy directing transition of these areas away from strip commercial development patterns in the future. The objective is to use site planning tools to connect businesses and residential areas as well as promote more attractive vehicular corridors and parking areas. The City is undertaking several major corridor studies anticipating boulevard treatments encompassing improvements in transit accessibility, pedestrian use, traffic flow, efficient business access and corridor landscaping. It is anticipated that the major commercial corridors will be evaluated for boulevard treatments over the next several years.

Institution

The expansion of the Valley Medical Center is expected to continue, although like Renton Technical College, available land is limited. As both of these institutional uses grow to serve the region, they will need to expand beyond their current boundaries or intensify land use within existing campuses.

Industrial

Industrial employment, especially manufacturing, is declining nation-wide. In the Puget Sound region, while the proportion of jobs in the industrial sector is projected to decline, the number of manufacturing jobs in this area is expected to remain relatively stable, at least through the year 2020.

In Renton, the most noticeable changes are occurring in the mix and type of industrial activities within the City. Most noticeable is a trend away from heavy industrial/manufacturing toward medium and light industrial uses. Although manufacturing is expected to remain stable and industrial jobs are expected to decline, the number of light and medium industrial jobs in wholesale/transportation/communications/utilities is projected to nearly double in the Renton area through 2020. Renton sees itself as an ideal market area for uses based on the biotechnology industry. In addition to Renton, several Puget Sound Region urban areas are competing for this niche market.

Changes are expected to occur in Renton's heavy industrial employment incrementally over a long period of time. Some heavy industrial areas, such as the Boeing Renton Plant in North Renton, are being redeveloped into other uses that will largely replace industrial

employment with other types. Other City heavy industrial sites subject to redevelopment may have inadequate infrastructure or high costs of hazardous material cleanup that could limit redevelopment or delay it until land value and demand increases. In other cases, viable heavy industrial uses exist and will continue to operate for several years, but property owners may anticipate a change in use over the long term. Although the rate of change in industrial lands is slow, it is significant because if too much land is converted to non-industrial uses, it could have a detrimental effect on retaining the industrial base. Within the Green River Valley, land use policy changed over the last ten years to allow a market-driven transition from industrial and warehousing uses to general commercial and retail. While existing industrial businesses are encouraged to operate and expand, they are no longer protected by an industrial-only protective zoning policy.

Office

In Renton, commercial uses and services were adversely affected by the downturn in the information technology industry in the late 1990's. The biggest impact of this event however, was on office vacancies, which rose significantly and at mid-decade, were just starting to turn around. This situation slowed the demand for office and service uses, which until then were healthy indicators of the regional and local shift from an industrial base to a service base.

Another trend is a blurring of land use category descriptions as technology changes the way work is done and more activities include office and computer components. This change is manifested by an increase in the mixes of uses, either within one company or within one building or complex. For example, many businesses are constellations of light industrial, manufacturing, research and development, and office uses. The ideal situation, in terms of regional needs (reduction of traffic on arterials for example), may be to add residential uses to that mix.

Annexation and City Boundary

As a requirement of the Growth Management Act, King County and the cities in King County have jointly developed Countywide Planning Policies. One of those adopted policies calls for the annexation of areas that are inside the Urban Growth Boundary but outside of city limits. The policies also establish 2012 as the target year for that policy to be fulfilled. As part of the review and ratification of the Countywide Planning Policies, the City of Renton identified several unincorporated areas as places where the City could logically provide services and designated them as Renton's Potential Annexation Area (PAA). Renton's PAA includes: the East Renton Plateau, Fairwood, and the West Hill.

It is anticipated that annexations within these PAA areas will significantly increase the land area and population of Renton over the next ten years. As these areas become a part of the City of Renton, the policies and land use designations of the Comprehensive Plan will be applied upon annexation.

Schools

The City of Renton is presently served primarily by the Renton School District, although a small area at the City's eastern boundary is within the Issaquah School District and a small area at the City's southern boundary is within the Kent School District.. The PAA

is served by Renton School District (West Hill), the Kent School District (Fairwood), and the Issaquah School District (East Renton Plateau).

Following its peak in 1970, Renton School District enrollment declined at the rate of 15 percent during the 1970's and 10 percent during the 1980's. Enrollment increased, however between 1990 and 2000, by 18 percent. The Renton District currently has adequate capacity for growth within its attendance area and has not requested that the City collect school impact fees on its behalf. In the future, however, larger enrollments and an increased need for facilities in the district is anticipated based on projected population growth within the city and the PAA.

The proportion of Renton residents served by the Issaquah School District on the East Renton Plateau and the Kent School District in the Fairwood area will increase as lands within the PAA come into the City. Expected population growth in the area served by the Issaquah School District is expected to support expansion of school facilities in this area. Renton is currently collecting impact fees for both the Issaquah School District and the Kent School District and expects to continue doing so.

Religious Centers

The trend over the past few decades has been for religious groups to provide a wider range of services to their members and the public at large. Food banks, teen clubs, adult day care, and K through 12 schools are a few of the faith-based functions now offered by the religious community. These services require additional land and facilities for classrooms, gymnasiums, offices, parking, and social services. Hours of worship, once primarily limited to the weekend, have expanded to include other activities on weekdays and evenings. As a result, these facilities are having a greater impact on adjacent neighborhoods and the existing infrastructure but are also providing local based service and facilities serving a broader population.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Renton has a well-designed and maintained parks and recreation system serving the needs of residents of the City and PAA. City facilities and programs are currently planned to accommodate a mix of resident and non-resident participants. Additional parks facilities are anticipated within the City to continue to provide neighborhood parks in developing areas. At the present time, City recreation programs and facilities are open to non-city residents on an increased fee basis. If growth occurs in the city limits without annexation, existing facilities will be increasingly unavailable to non-residents. The anticipated trend in parks services is for Renton to take over County developed parks and undeveloped future park sites as annexation occurs. Expansion of parks facilities will be required to keep pace with population growth. Renton supports an ambitious open space/greenway acquisition program, preserving natural areas in an urban environment, and ensuring public access to these areas with limited development and disturbances. It is expected that many of the sites acquired will remain relatively undisturbed, while wildlife and habitat areas that are less fragile will be more developed with park and recreation facilities and allow greater public use.

Transportation

There is one unchanging transportation trend within the region: traffic is increasing. Several factors are responsible for this: the growth in population, jobs, and housing; an increase in people commuting by single-occupant vehicles within the region and making longer trips; the location of employment and price of housing, which influences the length and type of trip made; and new housing development that is occurring on vacant land in outlying parts of the metropolitan area rather than on land closer to traditional urban centers (again, a function of the cost of housing and its relationship to the scale of wages); and the relocation of employment areas to suburban areas (frequently a function of land and transportation costs).

The cumulative effects of these factors are more cars on the road and greater traffic congestion. Based on the 95% reliable travel time figure from the Washington State Department of Transportation, the one-way commute time between Bellevue and Tukwila at AM peak time has increased from 28 minutes in 2004 to 32 in 2006. Commute time for the return trip during the PM peak remained the same at 27 minutes. The commute time between Auburn and Renton at AM peak time increased from 24 to 30 minutes, and the reverse PM trip increased from 32 to 36 minutes during the same period.¹¹

Transit ridership has increased by 6.44% since 1999.¹² In Renton, the South Renton Park and Ride lot is used at the rate of 102 percent. This indicates that vehicles are parked outside of and adjacent to the lot for the purpose of using the transit system.

Although a small number, the fact of its increase that has occurred since 2000 makes the 8 percent of people who walk or work at home significant. This is a trend that is expected to continue as more people telecommute and/or develop home-based businesses that are dependent on the internet. There has also been an increase in the number of people who commute by bicycle. Planning for improved and safer bike lanes may contribute to this trend.

Road condition in terms of the need for overlay, re-pavement, or reconstruction is another factor affecting the City's ability to maintain an efficient and safe transportation system. Renton has 32.8 lane miles in need of repaving/rehabilitation out of a total 460 lane miles. At an estimated cost of \$48.171 per lane mile, 43 percent of the amount needed was budgeted in 2006.

Significant improvements are planned for the Interstate-405 corridor. The City of Renton is working closely with the Washington State Department of Transportation on the I-405 Congestion Relief and Bus Rapid Transit Projects. The Washington State gas tax increases of 2003 and 2005 fund the I-405/ I-5 to SR 169 Widening Project, Stage 1 and Stage 2. The two stages of this project will add one lane on I-405 in each direction from I-5 to SR 169, one lane on southbound SR 167 from I-405 to SW 41st Street, and a half-diamond interchange on I-405 at Talbot Road S.

Preliminary design for future project phases is also moving forward. These project phases are not fully funded, but ultimate design would include two new lanes in each

direction on I-405, auxiliary lanes where appropriate, and improved interchanges, including the SR 167/I-405 interchange. These are long-term improvements that represent the ultimate build-out or Master Plan of I-405. The Implementation Plan also includes two new lanes in each direction but is an interim level of improvements, particularly for the SR 167/I-405 interchange. As part of a long-term strategy, the Master Plan builds on the Implementation Plan.

Most economic and growth trends will be impacted by the ability to physically move through the City and Region and get from one place to another. Therefore, transportation remains a key element in the overall economic picture.

Airport

The Renton Municipal Airport is a heavily used facility and demand on the Airport continues to increase steadily. This is primarily due to the Airport's function as a "reliever" facility for air traffic from the Seattle/Tacoma Airport. The other nearby reliever airport, Boeing Field (the King County International Airport), is frequently unavailable because it is functioning at about 98 percent capacity.

Closure of other general aviation airports in the region such as those that were at Bellevue, Issaquah, and Kent also increased the demand for small private planes and corporate jets use in Renton. In addition, there is increased activity at the Will Rogers / Wiley Post Memorial Seaplane Base due to closure of similar facilities elsewhere in the region.

The expected trend is continued demand at the Airport. This demand may be balanced, somewhat, by a corresponding decrease in Airport use by The Boeing Company as it changes the nature of its business in Renton. For example, 2004 saw the closing of the Boeing 757 production line. Since the Renton Airport is the existing facility used for Boeing aircraft following assembly, this change and other Boeing corporate changes will undoubtedly affect the Airport. The timing of anticipated changes, however, remains unknown to the City.

Public Facilities

In Renton, the late 1990's and early part of the next decade saw a significant increase in the inventory of major public facilities. These include the development of a "central park" (the Piazza in downtown), a public parking garage, a transit center, a performing arts center, a skateboard park, and a new public water park. This trend is expected to continue as Renton develops its Urban Center and as population growth continues.

GROWTH PROJECTIONS

The Puget Sound Regional Council population and employment forecast growth for the City over the twenty-one-year interval from 2001 to 2022 is an increase of 9,723 households, and 33,600 jobs. Growth targets adopted by the Growth Management Planning Council anticipate 6,198 households and 27,597 jobs. Both forecast growth and targets are well within the City's estimated land capacity of 11,261 units and 32,240 jobs

established through the Buildable Lands requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA). Renton is planning for its regional share of forecast growth over the next 20 years at the high end of the range, and the adopted target at the low end of the range. In the first 9 years of growth management actual growth in Renton exceeded targets, but was within the range predicted by the forecast growth assumptions. With external factors, including the regional economy, state/federal transportation funding and the GMA regulatory environment remaining constant or improving, Renton's growth is anticipated to continue.

The following chart summarizes Renton's forecast growth, targets and land use capacity.

	Incorporated Renton 2001-2022 (21yrs)	Adjusted Target/Capacity Reflecting Growth/ Annexation/Land Use Changes in 2001 and 2002	Annualized Estimate
Forecast Growth	9,723 units 33,600 jobs 22,266 population	None	463 units 1,600 jobs (21 yrs)
Growth Targets	6,198 units 27,597 jobs 14,194 population*	4,523 units 26,736 jobs	238 units 1,407 jobs (19 yrs adjusted for remaining target)
Capacity established by Buildable Lands	11,261 units 32,240 jobs* 25,788 population*	9,634 units 30,699 jobs	NA

Additional zoned capacity established for the Urban Center-North through the Boeing Comprehensive Plan Amendments in 2003 of 10,600,000 square feet of employment uses, 360 hotel rooms, and 3,225 units is not yet incorporated into the Buildable Lands database.

The economic downturn between 2000 and 2002 resulted in a loss of about 6 percent (3,120) of the 2000 total jobs (52,000). As a result, initial job growth during the planning period is expected to replace jobs first, rather than fulfill the promise of new jobs predicted by the employment forecast data. In a relatively small city, such as Renton, where there are a few large employers, such as Boeing, the employment rates are subject to wide fluctuations. In order to get a sense of the long-term projection of employment growth, it may be valuable to look at what is expected to occur on a larger scale. The average annual growth rate between 1970 and 2003, statewide, was 2.4

percent. It is expected that this rate will decrease to about 1.1 percent for the years 2003 to 2030. It is predicted that a higher rate, 1.4 percent will occur from 2003 to 2010, then that rate will slow to about 0.9 percent between 2010 and 2030⁸.

The reasons for this decline may be seen locally as well as statewide, or even nationally. The population is aging and birth rates are declining. There are possibilities that the rate could be influenced by factors such as a workforce made larger by a greater number of immigrants, should immigration regulations be relaxed, or by workers staying in the workforce beyond the traditional retirement age range of 62 to 65. The latter situation may be caused by disincentives to retirement caused by changes in pension plans or an increase in the Social Security retirement age and other changes to that program.

1. Renton, Where the Water Took Wing, David M. Buerge
2. "The 2003 King County Annual Growth Report," Office of Management and Budget
3. "The Changing Face of Renton," City of Renton, Department of Community Services, Human Services Division Washington State, Office of Financial Management
4. City of Renton, Department of Economic Development, Neighborhoods, and Strategic Planning
5. Renton Chamber of Commerce
6. King County, Office of Management and Budget and King County, Department of Assessments
7. "Benchmark Report, September 2004," Transportation and Environment, King County, Office of Management and Budget
8. "The 2004 Long-Term Economic and Labor Force Forecast for Washington," Washington State, Employment Security Department and the Office of Financial Management
9. "Rank of Cities and Towns by April 1, 2008 Population," Office of Financial Management.
10. Rank of Cities and Towns by Numeric Population Change, with Change due to Annexation, April 2, 2000 to April 1, 2008," Office of Financial Management.
11. "Measures, Markers, and Mileposts: The Gray Notebook for the Quarter Ending September 30, 2007," Washington State Department of Transportation.
12. "Puget Sound Trends," Puget Sound Regional Council, March 2007.